

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS, COMPLETE LISTING OF  
CLAIMS IN ASCENDING ORDER WITH STATUS INDICATOR**

Please cancel claims 15 and 18 without prejudice or disclaimer to their underlying subject matter.

1. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder, comprising the steps of:

- (a) mixing an aqueous ammonium tungstate solution with a carbon powder in a proportion to reduce and carburize ammonium tungstate to form a slurry,
- (b) drying the slurry to prepare a precursor,
- (c) subjecting the precursor to a reduction and carburization by heating to a temperature, at which a reduction and carburization proceeds, in a non-oxidizing gas atmosphere to form a reduced and carburized product,
- (d) mixing the reduced and carburized product with a carbon powder in a proportion required to carburize a  $W_2C$  component and/or a W component in the reduced and carburized product into WC, and
- (e) subjecting the reduced and carburized product mixed with the carbon powder to a carburization by heating to a temperature, at which a carburization proceeds, in a hydrogen atmosphere,

wherein an amount of the carbon (C) powder in step (a) with respect to the tungsten (W) component in ammonium tungstate by atomic ratio C/W is within a range of 3-4.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) is at least one of ammonium metatungstate and ammonium paratungstate.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) comprises a purity of at least 99.9% by weight based on the content of tungsten in the total metal component of said solution.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten

carbide powder according to claim 3, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) comprises a purity of at least 99.99% by weight based on the content of tungsten in the total metal component of said solution.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein a concentration of the aqueous ammonium tungstate solution in step (a) is within a range of 20-70% by weight.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein each carbon powder in step (a) and step (d) is a carbon black powder having a purity of at least 99.9% by weight.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 6, wherein each carbon powder in step (a) and step (d) is a carbon black powder having a purity of at least 99.99% by weight.

8. (CANCELED).

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the slurry in step (b) is dried at a drying temperature of not more than 350°C.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the non-oxidizing gas atmosphere of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is a mixed gas which substantially comprises nitrogen gas at normal pressure and CO gas, said CO gas being produced by the reduction and carburization of the precursor.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is within a range of 900-1600°C.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten

carbide powder according to claim 11, wherein the temperature of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is within a range of 1000-1200°C.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the carburization in step (e) is within a range of 900-1600°C.

14. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 13, wherein the temperature of the carburization in step (e) is within a range of 1000-1400°C.

15. (CANCELED).

16. (CANCELED).

17. (CANCELED).

18. (CANCELED).

19. (CANCELED).

20. (CANCELED).

21. (CANCELED).